
GENERAL VIEW
OF THE
AGRICULTURE
OF THE COUNTY OF
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WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATE OF ITS IMPROVEMENT



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JAMES DONALDSON

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GENERAL VIEW
OF THE
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OF THE COUNTY OF

BANFF,

WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE MEANS OF ITS IMPROVEMENT.

BY

JAMES DONALDSON,

FACTOR FOR THE HONOURABLE WILLIAM RAINES MASON OF BANFF.

DRAWN UP FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND
INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT.

R. Academics etc

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY THOMAS RUDDIMAN.

M.DCC,XCIV.

TO THE READER

GENERAL VIEW

It is requested that the Report be referred to the
Board of Agriculture of the Office of London with any
local remarks and suggestions which may occur on the
subject, and as soon as possible be forwarded to the

AGRICULTURE

It is hardly necessary to add that this Report is intended
to be a general view of the state of the country as regards
agriculture and husbandry, and not a detailed description of the
various branches of the industry.

WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE MEANS OF ITS IMPROVEMENT.

For Banks

LONDON

PRINTED BY T. BARNES, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

MDCCLXXXV.

TO THE READER.

IT is requested that this Paper may be returned to the Board of Agriculture, at its office in London, with any additional remarks and observations which may occur on the perusal, *written on the margin*, as soon as may be convenient.

It is hardly necessary to add, that this Report is, at present, printed and circulated for the purpose merely of procuring farther information respecting the Husbandry of this District, and to enable every one to contribute his mite to the Improvement of the Country.

THE Board has adopted the same plan in regard to all the other Counties in the United Kingdom; and will be happy to give every assistance in its power, to any person who may be desirous of improving his Breed of Cattle, Sheep, &c. or of trying any useful experiment in Husbandry.

LONDON, }
June 1794. }

INTRODUCTION.

IN Reports of this nature, it is in many cases impossible to adhere with propriety to the ancient limits of the counties to be described. These, it evidently appears, have, in general, been fixed by the political or ecclesiastical influence of the times, and for the most part, without regard either to local situation, or to the convenience and accommodation of the inhabitants. In no other instance will this observation apply with more force than in the present, as several detached parts of the county of Banff are to be found in the very center of Aberdeenshire. That being the case, it has been judged more distinct to confine this report to the country lying between the rivers Spey and Doveran; including that part of the county of Elgin and Forres on the south side of Spey, and which was purposely omitted in the report of that county, and also the parishes of Cairney and Glass, which, though locally situated in the county of Banff, belong politically to the county of Aberdeen.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

THE district to be considered in this report, is situated within the 58° of N. Latitude, and extends from Banff to Garmouth, along the south shore of the Moray frith, its northern boundary, about 24 English miles. The length from the bay of Cullen, in a south-west direction to Loch Avon, its southern boundary, is 50 miles. It preserves a mean length of nearly 20 miles, till within five miles of that lake, where it is suddenly compressed

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into.



into a breadth of little more than three miles, making a superficies of 1015 square miles, that is, 649,600 English acres, or 516,635 Scots acres.

The whole, except the tract along the sea-shore, may be very properly described as a hilly, mountainous country, interspersed with a great many fertile valleys, well adapted to the cultivation of corn and grass.

The hills are either covered with heath or moss, affording little pasture; while from their bleak and barren aspect, they have a very gloomy and unpleasant appearance.

The arable land, which bears but a small proportion to the waste, lies on the sides, and towards the bottoms of the higher hills, or on the sides of those valleys through which the waters have their courses, or on the narrow level plains on the banks of these waters.

In several of these valleys where cultivation has hitherto been found impracticable, there is abundance of fine healthy pasture, on which young cattle are reared to great advantage, the grounds being in general well sheltered by natural woods of oak, birch, alder, &c.

Rivers and Waters. The course of the river Spey, which forms the western boundary of this district, was fully described in the report of the county of Elgin and Forres.

The water of Avon has its source from the lake of that name, on the borders of the shires of Aberdeen and Inverness; and being joined in its progress by the water of Livat, falls into the Spey at Ballandallach, after a course of upwards of twenty miles.

The water of Fiddich has its rise in the hills of Glenfiddich and Strathdon, and after a course of some miles, is joined by the water of Dullan, and both fall into the Spey about two miles above Arntullie.

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The river Doveran, which takes its rise in Aberdeenshire, receives the waters of Calrach and Blackwater, which issue from the hills on the south and east sides of the district. The lands on their banks being better sheltered, and consequently more fertile, is the only circumstance relating to these waters which merits consideration here. The Doveran is not navigable, nor does it contribute to the formation of the harbour of Banff, nor to the port of Macduff on the southern banks, yet it is notwithstanding of importance on account of the value of its salmon fishings.

There are many other small rivulets, which fall into the frith at different places along the coast. These serve to turn the machinery of the corn mills erected upon them, and also the machinery necessary for carrying on different branches of manufactures established in that part of the country, particularly at Banff, Boyndie, Portsoy, and Cullen.

Soil.—Taking a general view of the whole district, the soil may be described as of three qualities. That of the plains on the banks of the waters, where it has not been mixed with sand by the washings of the streams, is a stiff deep clay; on the sides of the valleys it is a deep black loam on a bed of rock, generally limestone; and on the sides of the hills, and in the higher parts of the country, where cultivation has taken place, the soil is either the same as last described, or a mixture of moss and gravel on a red tilly bottom; and is, as may be supposed, very retentive of water.

Climate.—From the nature of the soil, as above described, as well as from its generally exposed situation, and the great height of many of the mountains, this district is often subjected to all the evils of a cold and rainy climate. The harvests are often interrupted and preca-

rious, and if not compleated before the end of October, the crops in the interior and more remote parts of the country, are for the most part damaged by rains, which about that season often set in for weeks together, are frequently succeeded (without any interval of good weather) by frosts and deep falls of snow, and often suspend the operations of husbandry for many of the winter months. In the years 1782 and 1787, the harvest continued for near three months. From this account, however, the lower part of the country from Duff-house to Forglen and Kinnairdy, a tract of about twelve miles along the river side, and from Banff to Gordon Castle, including the districts of Boyne and Enzie, must be excepted, being nearly equal to the climate of Moray, and greatly surpassing the most part of that county in the fertility of its soil, the improvements of its agriculture, and the richness of its productions.

Oats, Pease and Beans are sown from the beginning of March, to the middle of April. *Barley* seed commences about the beginning of May, and the sowing of *Wheat* in October, though sometimes so late as November. The harvest generally commences in the course of the first ten days of September, and in ordinary seasons is compleated in six or seven weeks, during which period the corns are all built and stacked in the yard.

Towns, Population and Manufactures.—In this district there are two Royal Burghs, viz. Banff and Cullen, situated on the coast, and at the distance of twelve miles from each other. Banff contains upwards of 3500 souls, but Cullen, in regard to population and wealth, is equalled by several of the villages in the county, of which Portsoy, Keith and Fochabers are the most considerable; though there are a great many other villages, both in

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the interior parts of the country and along the sea-coast, which may contain from 100 to 500 inhabitants in each, so that the population of the district is very considerable, and may be accounted at 38,000 souls: The greatest proportion of them are no doubt engaged in agriculture, though a very considerable number is employed in commerce, manufactures, and the fisheries on the coast.

Several of the villages in this county being situated upon the shore of the Moray frith, are principally inhabited by fishermen, who follow no other occupation. They fish for cod, ling, skate, macarel, whiting, and haddock, of which last species an immense quantity was caught along this coast during the winter 1792-3, though they have been remarkably scarce for several years on the South-east coast of Scotland; and besides supplying the county of Banff, a great quantity of dried fish is sent over land to the counties of Elgin and Aberdeen, and the remainder, amounting to several thousand dozens of salted cod, ling, skate and haddock, is annually exported by the fishermen themselves to Montrose, Arbroath, Dundee, Perth, and the towns along the sides of the Frith of Forth, to the value of upwards of L. 3000 Sterling yearly; a considerable proportion of which sum they expend in the purchase of coal, salt, and such other articles as they judge they can purchase cheaper than they could do at home; with the remainder they purchase cloaths, meat and the other necessaries they stand in need of; and from this fund also the rent is paid to the proprietor of the villages in which they reside. The general terms of agreement between a proprietor of one of these villages, and a boat's crew, are as follows: The fishing boat complete, which generally costs L. 22. is furnished by the proprietor;

proprietor ; the crew, which consists of six men, become jointly bound to employ the boat for seven years in the white fishing on the coast, and to pay a rent of five guineas yearly for the boat, and a small piece of ground for building their houses (which they do at their own expence), and for gardens. They are obliged to uphold the boat during the seven years, at the end of which period, the proprietor furnishes the hull of a new boat, which generally costs about L. 11. But in the event of a boat not lasting seven years, the proprietor furnishes a new one at his own expence, and the crew agree to pay a yearly advance of rent above the five guineas, in proportion to the period which was to run of the seven years, when the former boat became unserviceable.

In case of the death of any of the boatmen, some person agreeable to the proprietor, and to the other fishermen, gets possession of the house and garden of the deceased, with his share of the profits of the concern. But he is obliged to pay the widow, or relations of his predecessor, a certain consideration for the house, and any improvements that may have been made on the garden.

It appears from the Custom-house books of Aberdeen and Inverness, that in the course of seven years preceding January 1794, there were exported from this county 429,571 dried cod and ling, 366 barrels of salted cod, 15,800 dried skate, and 148,700 dried haddocks, all which are disposed of on the south-east coast of Scotland, as before mentioned. The export of salmon in the same period, from that part of this coast under the jurisdiction of the Custom-house of Aberdeen, but in which the fishings on the Spey are not included, have been 2,630 barrels salted, and 20,903 kits of fresh salmon. The first is generally sent up the Mediterranean, and the last find a ready sale at the London market.

Manufactures.

Manufactures were first introduced into this district by the same patriotic Nobleman who led the way to improvements in agriculture. At the beginning, their progress was slow, and of little value; but of late years they have become of considerable importance.

In the course of the last seven years, it appears, that besides a very great quantity of linen yarn and coarse linen cloth, which is exported over-land from the country, generally to Aberdeen, Glasgow and Paisley, there has in that period been shipped from Banff, Portsoy, and Macduff*, a sea port in this county, though situated on the south side of Doveran, 710,000 spindles of linen yarn, 507,108 pounds weight of white and coloured threads,

* Formerly called Downen, a contraction of Doveran, probably from the river of that name emptying itself into the sea at a place called *the Craig*, close to this town, which it is asserted was the case about 300 years ago. Macduff was a village inhabited only by fishers, containing about 300 souls, and about the year 1761 the whole rent amounted only to L. 55 : 11 : 1 $\frac{1}{2}$. It is well situated for a harbour, the present Noble Proprietor (the Earl of Fife) having lately expended nearly L. 5000 to compleat it.

His Lordship has granted a considerable number of feus, each containing 32 falls, for which 16s. 8d. of feu-duty is payable yearly. By this means a great many manufacturers and others have been induced to build substantial commodious houses, and the adjoining lands are let to the inhabitants at from 20 to 30s. per acre, by which means the rent is now advanced to L. 500 sterling, and the number of inhabitants are upwards of 1300; and from every appearance there is reason to believe that this town will increase rapidly in population and prosperity, which ought to induce other proprietors to follow an example so well calculated to promote public and private interest.

threads, 8,755 dozen pairs of thread and worked stockings, and 725 dozen pairs of leather shoes. The linen yarn and thread is made partly of flax imported from Holland, and partly of flax the growth of the district.

There was no possibility of ascertaining the quantity of each kind manufactured: But when it is considered that in the neighbourhood of Keith alone there are four mills erected for scutching flax, and that at each of these from 1000 to 1500 stones are annually dressed, there can be no doubt but a very considerable quantity of flax is annually cultivated in this district, beyond what is necessary for the use of the inhabitants.

It does not appear that any linen cloth is exported from this district by sea: But it is certain that at the Stamp Office in the town of Keith only, within the last seven years, there have been 154,649 yards of cloth stamped for sale.

The distance from the sea ports, and the wretched state of the roads, may account for this species of manufacture being carried to Aberdeen and the other markets over land.

There are several bleachfields in this district. One in the neighbourhood of Cullen has been long established, and at which about 1500 pieces of linen and 1700 spindles of yarn are whitened yearly.

The stockings and shoes are exported to foreign markets; the white and coloured threads are disposed of in London; and the linen yarn is sent to Aberdeen, and other places on the east coast of Scotland.

Extent:

Extent of Estates, Land Rents, and Tenor of Leases.—

In this district there are three proprietors, each of whose estates here amount to from L. 7000 to L. 12000. There are eight others who possess from L. 600 to L. 1000; and the remainder is shared in small estates from L. 300 to L. 400 of yearly rent; amounting in all, including L. 1200 for the salmon fishings on Doveran, to L. 43,500.

Though the family seats of the great proprietors are situated in this district, yet from necessary attendance to their duty in Parliament, and from other avocations, there are none of them who reside here above a few months in the year.

Besides the parks and pleasure grounds around the mansion houses, they each retain a certain extent of arable farm, which is managed on the most approved principles. Many of the other proprietors also are employed in the Army or Navy, or in some department of the Law, so that there are but few who reside in the district, or who have time or opportunity for paying that degree of attention to the growing improvements of their own estates, or of the country at large, which the importance of the object so justly merits; while that proper connection which ought to subsist between landlords and tenants, and which uniformly takes place in all countries where improvements in agriculture have been successfully carried on, is here attended to only by a few individuals, who, by a proper attention to their own interests, have learned that such a conduct alone can secure the introduction of a general spirit of improvement among all classes of tenants in any country.

The rent of the arable lands in this district may be accounted at 12 s. the acre, exclusive of natural pasture, and exclusive also of the lands adjoining to the several

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towns.

towns and villages, which from local situation and other advantages give from L. 2 to L. 4 the acre. The rents are paid partly in money, and partly in barley and oat meal: The money rent is always paid at the term of Martinmas, after reaping the crop, and the barley and oat-meal between Christmas and Candlemas thereafter. The ordinary term of entry to a farm is at Whitsunday, as to the houses, garden and meadow grafs; and to the arable land at the separation of that year's crop from the ground. The leases in general endure for nineteen years, though there are several farms on the Earl of Findlater's estate between Banff and Cullen, of which leases were granted (about the year 1759) for two nineteen years, and the lifetime of the tenant in case he should survive that period. The farm-houses and offices are valued to the tenant on his entry, and he is bound to uphold them, so as to be of equal value at his removal, or he must pay the deficiency in money to the next incoming tenant. A liberty is reserved by the proprietor to work all mines and minerals, and to cut drains through the farm, for the purpose of draining any other farm on the estate; the tenant being entitled to recover any damage that may be done to the surface, as the same may be ascertained by persons to be mutually chosen. Proprietors also reserve liberty of planting any moor or pasture grounds within the limits of the farm, which they may incline to plant, at any period during the lease, and without making any discount of rent to the tenant for the lands so taken off.

The only clause contained in the lease in regard to the management of the land, is, that the tenant shall not waste it by improper cropping.

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The tenants are in general bound to pay cess, taxes, schoolmaster's salary, and all public burdens imposed or to be imposed, and further to be amenable to the decisions of the Baron Bailies in all questions relating to the preservation of growing timber, cutting meadow ground, winter herding, mill exactions, and such other matters as naturally fall under the cognisance of this Court.

Astirctions to mills is here, with a few exceptions, in full force, and the tenants are bound by their leases to grind their corns at particular mills, where in general from the eighth to the fifteenth part of the corns so grinded is exacted, but on an average about the twelfth, although every farmer is obliged to be at the expence of erecting a kiln on his farm, of drying his corns, and of sending his servants to the mill to assist in manufacturing them into meal. He is further bound to perform his proportion of labour, along with the other tenants, in supporting the fabric of the mill, and keeping the drains and water courses in order.

On the Earl of Fife's estates in this district, the most extensive exactions of multures were prestable by the usage of ancient times. At several of the mills on his property, the eighth or ninth part of all the grindable corns were exacted. This his Lordship has abolished, and receives two shillings and three-pence in the pound of rent payable by each tenant astircted to these mills; and has adopted the same plan at his other mills, in proportion to the extent of thirlage paid, thereby keeping up the old mill rent, and banishing a practice of feudal severity which occasioned yearly animosities and constant law-suits.

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His Lordship also, much to his credit, has abolished all customs and services payable by his tenants, and converted the same on very moderate terms.

Extent, and Mode of managing the Farms.

Though there are many farms in this district which contain from 100 to 200 acres of arable land, yet the general extent of them may be rated at from 40 to 60 arable acres. The remainder is either occupied by tenants who possess from five to fifteen or twenty acres, or in small lots by the inhabitants of the different towns and villages.

It does not appear that previous to the year 1748, any improvements in agriculture were introduced into this district. In those days the mode of management was the same here, as was then universally practised all over the North of Scotland. The arable lands on every farm, were divided into what was called outfield and infield. To the infield, which consisted of that part of the farm nearest to the farm houses, the whole manure was regularly applied. The only crops cultivated on the infield land were *oats*, *bar* and *pease*, and the lands were kept under tillage as long as they would produce two or three returns of the seed sown; and when a field became so reduced and so full of weeds, as not to yield this return, it was allowed to lie in natural pasture for a year or two, after which, it was again brought under cultivation, and treated in the manner before mentioned. The outfield lands were wasted by a succession of oats after oats, as long as the crops would pay for seed and labour, and afford a small allowance of oatmeal for the family. They were then allowed to remain in a state of absolute sterility, producing only thistles and other weeds,

weeds, till after having been rested in this state for some years, the farmer thought proper to bring them again under cultivation, when, from the mode of management before described, a few scanty crops were obtained.

Oxen ploughs only were used, and when the barley seed was finished, the cattle were either sold to dealers, or sent to the glens or valleys in the remote parts of the district, where they were grazed for three or four months in summer at the low rate of 1 s. or 1 s. 6d. each, and during this period the plough was laid aside, and the farmer's servants and horses were employed in providing the necessary stock of fuel, and in collecting moss or clay, to be mixed with the dung produced by the cattle during the preceding winter. The horses were either *retained* on the best of the infield pasture, or trusted to the management of a herd; and as it may easily be supposed, these animals often went beyond the bounds of the pasture allotted to them, and committed depredations on the adjoining corn fields.

About the period above mentioned, the late Earl of Finlater, then Lord Deskford, to whose unremitting exertions are to be ascribed the introduction of improvements in agriculture, as well as manufactures, in this country, came to reside in the neighbourhood of Banff, and having taken one of his farms into his own possession, set about cultivating it on the most approved manner then known in England, and for that purpose engaged an experienced overseer from that kingdom, to take the charge of it, and in a few years improved that farm in a style and manner unknown in that part of the country. But his Lordship was sensible, however successful he might be in the cultivation of his own particular farm, it was not probable that this success would operate so
powerfully

powerfully on the minds of his tenants, as to induce them, without some substantial reasons, to venture on untried experiments, or to leave the beaten tract, in which they and their fathers had trode for ages. He therefore formed, and executed a plan, which did great credit to his judgment, and which in its consequences has been highly beneficial, as it tended to awaken that spirit for improvement which has now become general over the district, at least among the proprietors and more respectable farmers. His Lordship selected some of the most intelligent, active and substantial tenants in the country, to whom he granted leases on reasonable terms, for two nineteen years and a lifetime, of farms formerly occupied by three or four tenants. By these leases, the tenants became bound to inclose and subdivide a certain portion of the farm with stone fences, or ditch and hedge, during the first nineteen years of the lease, and in the course of the second nineteen years, to inclose the remainder. This the tenants became bound to do, under a certain penalty, which was mentioned in the leases. The tenants were also bound to summer fallow, and sow grass seeds on a certain number of acres within the first five years of the lease.

His Lordship also first introduced the turnip husbandry, and by his precept and example, was the means of bringing the cultivation of this crop, by degrees, into general practice.

It is not to be expected that any general improvement in the modes of agriculture, can be introduced all at once, or that the inhabitants of a country will, on a sudden, give up their old habits and ways of thinking. They must be induced to do so, either from the advantage which they are satisfied they will derive in consequence of

of making new arrangements with the proprietors, or from a conviction in their own minds, that the experiments which their more adventurous neighbours have attempted, have proved successful and advantageous, and therefore, notwithstanding Lord Finlater's unwearied exertions, it was many years before fallow and sowing grass seeds, turnip, and other green crops, came into general practice, even in that corner of his estate where he himself resided; but the tenants being at last satisfied that the improvements introduced by his Lordship were such, as, if adopted by them, would promote their interest, they set about making experiments, which having in every instance exceeded expectation, the spirit of improvement began of course to gain ground, and his Lordship's example having been followed by many of the other proprietors, and by several of the more intelligent farmers in other parts of the country, the system of agriculture, the circumstances of the tenants, and the general appearance of the country, became thereby greatly improved, though it is no doubt possible to carry on these and other improvements to a much greater extent, were the proprietors to give that encouragement to the tenants, without which it is in vain to suppose that any solid or substantial improvement can be brought about in any country.

Though the tenants are not bound by their leases to follow any fixed or steady rotation of cropping, and tho' few of them adhere strictly to any one particular system, yet on the farms occupied by the proprietors, and also on the large farms, where the lands are inclosed and subdivided, a considerable proportion is annually under fallow, turnip and other green crops, and generally near one third of the farm is under sown grass. The quanti-

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ty of grafs seeds commonly sown, is 8 lb. red clover, 8 lb. white clover, with a small proportion of rib-grafs seed, and two bushels rye-grafs seed, on each acre. The grafs is cut the first year for hay, and pastured at least two, and sometimes three years thereafter. On the small farms in the interior and remote parts of the district, little alteration of system has hitherto taken place. What is most worthy of notice is, that the ridges are better straighted, and that a small plot of sown grafs and turnip are to be seen on almost every farm.

The mode of culture adopted for raising the different crops on the more improved farms in the district, is as follows :

Wheat. From the preceding account of the climate, it will be inferred, that the cultivation of this species of crops must be limited to that part of the district lying along the coast ; but even there, owing to the lateness of the harvests, and the quantities of rain which generally fall in Autumn, the number of acres in wheat is inconsiderable in proportion to the after crops ; it is sown after fallow, potatoes or grafs.

In the course of the fallow, the land is plowed in the beginning of winter, again after the barley seed is finished, and two or three times afterwards, according as the situation of the ground may require, or the season will permit. Before the last furrow is given, which generally happens in September, manure is applied ; when wheat is sown after potatoes or grafs, one plowing is deemed sufficient. The quantity of seed allowed to the acre, is from 12 to 16 pecks, according to the time of sowing. The species most cultivated here is the common red, and the *Essex white* wheat.

Oats

Oats is here considered as the staple grain, and cultivated in much greater quantities than any other species, oat-meal being still the general food of the inhabitants, and on which also the tenants principally depend for payment of a considerable part of their rents. Oats are sown after grass, barley, turnips, pease, wheat, and sometimes after oats. The ground is plowed either in Autumn, or in the Spring, as the weather will permit, and about four firlots Linlithgow measure is sown on each acre, and the returns are from 6 to 7 bolls the acre, though often in favourable seasons considerably more on such farms as are in a high state of cultivation. Several species of early oats were introduced into this country in the spring 1783, when many of the public-spirited proprietors, particularly the Earl of Fife, sensible of the great risk of sowing the damaged grain of the preceding crop, imported very considerable quantities for the accommodation of his tenants. But what are most generally cultivated, are a kind common in the country, and known by the name of *early* oats, in contradistinction to those common in the neighbouring province of Moray, which are about a fortnight later of being ripe.

Barley was, during the continuance of the ancient system of husbandry, considered as the most valuable crop, and was cultivated in much greater quantities than any other kind of grain, except oats. But since the introduction of turnips and sown grass, and since the breeding and rearing of stock have become objects of great importance, the quantity of barley annually sold has decreased, though the returns by the acre are much more abundant. This crop is sown after oats, pease, or turnip; when after oats or pease, the land is three times plowed, the first plowing being given soon after the harvest; the second, which is here called stirring, is perform-

ed when the oat-seed is finished, and immediately after, the manure, which had been procured in the course of the former winter, is spread on the ground, which is again plowed in the month of May, when seed at the rate of 14 or 15 pecks is sown on the acre. The returns are from 6 to 8 bolls on the acre. Barley, the produce of such farms as are now under review, weighs from 17 to 19 stones Amsterdam per boll, in good seasons: the common Scots barley is the only species generally raised here.

Pease and Beans are not cultivated in great quantities here, and very seldom together. In the interior and more remote parts of the district, beans will not come to maturity. They succeed wheat or oats, and are generally sown after one furrow, which is given sometimes in Autumn and sometimes in Spring. The quantity of pease sown is generally about five firlots, and of beans six firlots wheat measure, to the acre. The returns are very variable; in a favourable dry season, from six to ten are often reaped off the acre; but when the season is wet and rainy, the crops of grain are very deficient.

Potatoes. The cultivation of this root came into general practice here about forty years ago. They are now raised in considerable quantities on every farm, and the poorest tradesman and labourer, as well as the most extensive farmer, raise a sufficiency for the use of their families. The white kidney kind is chiefly cultivated here.

They are now generally planted on land prepared by the plough, and drilled and horse-hoed like other green crops. The general introduction of potatoes, as a crop in the open field, is, without doubt, the most important improvement in agriculture that ever found its way into this kingdom, particularly to the more northerly parts of it, where

where the crops of grain are often injured by the lateness of the harvests; for had not this valuable root been in general use in this district in the spring of 1783, it is very probable that many of the inhabitants would have perished for want of food, or their living constantly on the damaged oat-meal of the preceding crop, would have been the means of generating diseases, which might have proved fatal to them.

Turnip. It has been already observed, that the late Earl of Findlater was the first who introduced the turnip husbandry into this country about the 1748, and though this crop is now common on almost every farm, it is not, however, cultivated to so great an extent as it ought to be. The land is plowed three times, and the seed is sown in drills from eighteen inches to three feet distance from each other, and from the 10th to the 25th of June is the ordinary seed time. The crop is consumed partly in feeding cattle for the butcher, and partly by the milch cows and young cattle.

Flax is cultivated to a considerable extent in this district, and to advantage. It is partly manufactured for the use of the inhabitants, but much the greater quantity is manufactured for exportation, as has been already more particularly mentioned. An acre of Flax sold on the field before pulling, gives from L. 7 to L. 8, and sometimes from L. 10 to L. 12.

Implements of Husbandry.

The implements of husbandry all over this district about forty years ago, were, as may easily be supposed, very rudely constructed. In those days, creels, or *cur-rocks*, a semicircular basket made of twigs, and fixed one on each side of the horse by means of a kind of saddle, supplied

supplied the place of the dung cart, and were also employed in carrying the stock of fuel from the moss. The grain, meal and lime, (of which last article from 50 to 60,000 bolls were annually exported, as will be more particularly mentioned hereafter,) were carried in sacks on horses backs, often for ten, fifteen, and sometimes twenty miles on a stretch. The only plough used in the country, was the kind now generally known by the name of the Scots plough, and which, with the ordinary and poorer class of tenants, still retains its place, after having undergone some little improvement.

The late Earl of Findlater, about the year 1748, when he commenced his farming operations, imported ploughs, harrows, and other implements of husbandry, such as were then used in England, and in the best cultivated and most improved parts of Scotland. The other proprietors and severals of the most intelligent farmers followed his Lordship's example, and either imported these implements of a more improved construction, or employed the tradesmen in the country to make them from the pattern of those which had been imported.

The ploughs, carts, harrows, and other implements of husbandry, on the farms occupied by the proprietors, and of those in the possession of the more intelligent and substantial tenants, are now framed nearly on the model of those used in the most improved parts of the kingdom. On some of these farms, trains drawn by two or four oxen, and carts drawn by two horses, have of late been introduced; but unless considerable sums are expended in repairing the roads, there is no chance that carriages of this description can come into general use.

Threshing-mills have also been introduced of late, and the advantages of them seem to be so well known and established, that there is no doubt of their soon coming into

into general use. On the small farms in the higher part of the country, the implements of husbandry are nearly the same as formerly described. The only improvements worth taking notice of, is, that the creels, or *cur-rocks*, are now generally laid aside, and small carts, suitable to the strength and size of the horses in that part of the country, have been introduced.

Farm Houses and Offices.

It was the ancient custom in this district, as well as in every other part of the kingdom, to have the farm houses placed together so as to form small villages. In those days also the tenants possessed their farms in runrig, or runfield. The chief reason for the introduction of these practices, seems to have been the idea of protection, as by thus living together, and possessing a mixed kind of property, the inhabitants would be more enabled, and at the same time more disposed to protect themselves and their property from these bands of freebooters, who so frequently committed depredations on the low part of the country; but gradually, as the manners of the people became more civilized, and the laws and authority of government came in consequence to be more respected, these customs began to lose ground; runrig and runfield are now scarcely known here; and where the farms have been granted in lease to one tenant, in place of four or five, these villages have of course become unnecessary.

When new houses were requisite on a farm, it was the practice for the proprietor to furnish the timber, and for the tenant to carry the whole of the materials, and be at all the other expence of erecting the fabric. On the expiry of his lease, the houses were given over to the next entering.

entering tenant; he, on the one hand, receiving from his predecessor any such sum, as the persons mutually chosen had determined, as the extent of damage, which the timber had sustained during the former lease; and on the other, becoming bound to leave it at his removal equal in value to the original cost. By these means there is a certain extent, of what is here called *master's timber*, on every farm in the country, which becomes a burden on the incoming tenant, and may account in some measure for so little alteration having taken place in the accommodation of the middling class of tenants; as this master's timber, for which the new tenant generally pays a sum, which to him is considerable, would be of little or no value if taken off the houses, or applied to any other purpose.

The first farm houses and offices constructed on regular plans in this district, were built by Lord Findlater's tenants on his estates between Cullen and Banff, about the year 1759. This improvement was the natural consequence of leases, which his Lordship had granted, as by three or four farms being joined into one, new houses on a more extensive scale, and in a more central situation, became necessary. Such farm houses and offices are not *now* peculiar to any one particular part of the district: On every estate where the proprietors have entered into the liberal ideas of enlarging the size of the farms, such buildings are to be seen. The dwelling-house consists of two stories built of stone and lime, covered with slate, and neatly and commodiously finished within. The offices, which generally form three sides of a square, are also built of stone and lime, and either covered with slate, tyle, or a substantial thatch of straw. It is, however, proper to observe, that the expence of erecting these buildings,

buildings, and the total loss of the value of the master's timber, originally on the farm, falls entirely on this description of tenants, who, on account of their thus acquiring an extent of land to rent, so far beyond what is the lot of the general run of tenants in the country, agree to furnish themselves with the necessary accommodation of houses, on condition of their being allowed a certain sum at the expiry of the lease, and which in no case exceeds two years rent of the farm, but which in *every case* must fall much below the original expence, even if no interest for the money originally expended is brought into the calculation.

The habitations of the poorer tenants, mechanics, and labourers, have for a long series of years been constructed in a much superior manner to those in similar circumstances, in any other country north of the Grampian mountains. They are generally built of stone and clay, and pointed, or harled with lime, and properly thatched with straw. The only improvement that has recently taken place, is a small window or two with panes of glass, in place of an aperture, which was formerly shut by a board. The dwellings, however, might still be improved by enlarging the size of the windows, and laying the floors with wood, brick, or stone, in place of earth, of which they are at present composed. This probably might tend more than any other measure to introduce new ideas respecting the comforts of life, and thereby induce this class of people to adopt modes of industry, at present unknown to them, though now in general practice among their neighbours in the more southerly, and more improved parts of the kingdom.

To the credit of the proprietors, it should be observed, that there are more towns and villages erected under *feu-charter*.

charter in this country, than any north of the river Tay. The houses in these towns and villages are built of the best materials, and finished in the most substantial manner; and the avidity with which the inhabitants in the neighbourhood grasp at every new opportunity of acquiring these holdings, is a sufficient proof of the increase of manufactures, and the good faith under which these *feus* have all along been granted.

Labourers, and the Price of Labour.

It has been observed, that by far the greatest proportion of the inhabitants are employed in agriculture; but a very considerable number are engaged in commerce, manufactures and fisheries on the coast, which, added to the emigration of great numbers of both sexes, of the lower class, which takes place yearly to the south of Scotland, has tended to raise the price of labour in this district, which is nearly doubled within these fifteen years.

The wages of an ordinary ploughman, are from L. 6 to L. 7 Sterling by the year, and those of a woman, from L. 2 to L. 3. A man engaged for the harvest, which generally lasts 6 or 7 weeks, though frequently much longer, receives L. 1 : 10, and a woman about L. 1. A labourer hired by the day, for casting peats, cutting hay, or in harvest, receives 10 d. and his victuals, and in winter, 6 d. or 7d. with his victuals.

In spring, summer, and autumn, the labouring cattle are worked for about four hours in the morning, and for the same space in the afternoon, and in winter between four and five hours in the day.

All the corns are threshed by the farm servants, which operation, together with the manufacturing of them, and carrying the meal to the markets at the different seaports, constitute most part of the winter's work.

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The servants are in general maintained in the family. Those who have families, and reside in detached houses on the farm, besides their house and a small garden, have six and a half bolls of oat meal, at 8 stone Amsterdam, and generally have a cow's grafs allowed them, and their fuel carried home by the farmer's horses.

The ordinary mode of maintaining the farm servants who reside in the family, is so similar to that which is practised in the neighbouring county of Elgin, and which was fully detailed in the report of that district, that it appears unnecessary to enter into particulars here. It is only proper to add, that oat-meal and potatoes are the principal food of the servants, labourers, mechanics, and poorer tenants; though on Sundays and Christmas holidays, they have butcher's meat and fish on many occasions.

Roads and Bridges.

The public and parochial roads in this district are in general in a very wretched situation. The great post road from Banff to Fochabers, is not kept in such a state of repair as might be expected, considering that there are few counties more populous, and more closely inhabited, than the one through which this road passes. Many of the rivulets are yet without bridges of any kind, and in some places the road is conducted in the worst possible direction. This is particularly the case at the bay of Sandend, between Portsoy and Cullen, where the road is carried down a very steep hill on one side of the bay, and made to ascend one equally high on the other; while at the entry of the bay, from either side, the traveller has to ford a considerable stream of water, which

is often swelled, not only by extraordinary floods, but by high tides, which repel the waters in their courses, and thereby render the passage difficult, and often dangerous. In the month of December last, the post-boy very narrowly escaped being drowned, in consequence of a high tide, while the rivulet was in flood at the same time. This evil might be remedied, and a much better level obtained, were the road carried along the high grounds on the south side of the bay.

The public road from the south side of the county, by Keith to Fochabers, is perhaps the worst in Great Britain, having been in a great measure neglected almost ever since its original formation, under the direction of the late Earl of Findlater, and must soon become totally impassable, unless very great exertions are made by those proprietors whose estates are connected with it; at present, it is really in the highest degree dangerous for strangers to attempt to travel from Keith to Fochabers in winter.

The roads from the interior parts of the country to the sea-ports of Banff, Portsoy, and Garmouth, are much in the same state with the one last mentioned, and are in a manner impassable for several months in winter. In the more remote parts of the district, greater attention seems to be paid to the roads. In this respect the parishes of Mortlich, Glafs, and Botriphney, are better accommodated than the parishes nearer to the coast. Those in Botriphney are constantly kept in better order than any other in the county. This is owing to the great attention which Alexander Mill Esq; of Chappleton, factor for Mr Duff of Drummure, has for many years paid to making and keeping the roads on that estate in proper repair; an example

ample well worthy the imitation of every person in the district, entrusted with the execution of this branch of police, as by his uncommon exertions and steady application, he has demonstrated, that even in this deep swampy soil, it is possible to make good roads. But it is unfortunate that the advantages of them are comparatively of little consequence to the inhabitants of that part of the county, because, when they leave their own parish, on their way to the sea-ports, with the produce of their farms, they have to encounter all the difficulties and inconveniencies, that are to be expected on roads, to the repairs of which no attention is paid.

Considering the great quantity of meal and grain which is annually exported from this district, and the distance at which the great body of the farmers reside from the sea-ports, certainly no greater improvement could be introduced, nor one, however expensive, that would be more for the interest of the proprietors, than that of good roads. It is evident, that the farmer in every country pays rent conform to the advantages which he enjoys; and it is equally clear, that though good roads in that country would no doubt cost a very considerable sum, yet even if the proprietors were to be at the whole expence, without applying to Parliament for leave to erect toll bars, still they would receive a high interest for the money so expended, in the additional rent which the farmers would chearfully pay for the accommodation. There is no doubt but four or five times the quantity of meal or grain would be carried on one cart, from the parishes of Mortlich, Glass or Botriphney, to Portsoy or Banff, more than at present, if the roads were good; and therefore any person that will calculate the

saving of time, of expence, and of tear and wear of horses, carts, harness, &c. will be able to form some idea of the loss which the agricultural interest of this district sustains by the roads being allowed to remain in their present disgraceful situation.

It is scarcely possible, that under the act 1669, the roads in this country can ever be made tolerable. If upon inquiry, it is found that the agriculture and commerce of the country in their present state will not afford making turnpike roads; yet another plan might be adopted, which would certainly be attended with very beneficial consequences, viz. that of applying to Parliament for a particular road act for the district, by which the statute labour might be converted, and a sum thereby annually collected, which, if properly applied to the repairs of the roads, would do more service in one year, than is done in seven, under the present management. Such road acts as above mentioned, were procured some years ago for the counties of Perth, Angus, and lately for Inverness-shire: But as the proprietors of Aberdeen-shire have it seriously in contemplation to apply for leave to make turnpike roads in that part of the country, it is to be hoped that the public spirit of the gentlemen in this district will induce them to follow so laudable an example; which would essentially promote the improvement of agriculture and commerce, as well as their own interest, and the ease and convenience of the inhabitants.

In the report of the county of Elgin and Forres, the great utility of a bridge or bridges across the river Spey, in order to open a safe and easy communication to this district, was fully pointed out. It is therefore unnecessary to enter so fully on the subject here. It may however

however be added, that if it shall be found impracticable at present to raise a sum necessary for erecting a bridge at Fochabers, which is much to be feared, the proprietors of both sides of the river, at the boat of Brigg, would not only greatly promote their own interest, but also do an important service to the North of Scotland at large, were they to adopt the proper measures, in order to get a bridge built across the river at that place. The sum requisite would not exceed L. 3000, a considerable part of which might easily be obtained by voluntary subscription, were the Earl of Findlater, who is the greatest proprietor, and consequently most interested in bringing about this improvement, to give up any trifling rent which he may receive for the passage boat, and begin the business by a liberal donation. Should the sum thus procured be inadequate for the purpose, an act of Parliament might be obtained, and a very small toll or pontage would not only secure a fund for payment of the interest of the sum to be borrowed, but also such a sum as would keep the bridge, when built, in a complete state of repair. As the Earl of Findlater resides abroad, it is to be hoped his men of business, who pay the greatest attention to his interest in the management of his estates, will represent the importance of this improvement, in such a manner, as to induce his Lordship to take the lead in effecting an object, which, when attained, would so greatly promote the improvement of the country.

In the report above referred to, the forming a new line of road from Portsoy to Elgin, was suggested as a proper measure, in case a bridge was erected at Boat of Brigg. The advantages of a road in that direction were particularly mentioned, in so far as concerned the county of Elgin:

gin. From the state of the roads in this district, as before described, it is obvious that the farmers who reside in the interior and more remote parts of the country, have very great difficulties to encounter in carrying the produce of their farms to market, and the merchants and manufacturers about Keith, Newmill, and the other villages in that corner, labour under the like inconveniences, in conveying their goods to and from the sea-ports.

In order to promote improvements in agriculture, and the increase of manufactures in that part of the country, it is humbly suggested, as a proper measure, to form a new line of road to Portsoy, on the best possible level to Keith or Newmill, from whence one branch should be carried to the Boat of Brigg, nearly in the direction of the present road, and the other to Mortlich. This road, after leaving the coast, would run through the parishes of Grange, Keith, Botriphney, and Mortlich. Another road from Banff, keeping as near to the north banks of Doveran, as the nature of the grounds will permit, and to join the other road near to where the roads from Banff, Portsoy, and Cullen, to Keith, now meet in the parish of Grange, would open an easy communication from the most extensive and most valuable tract of arable land in the county, to the sea-ports of Banff and Portsoy; the advantages which must necessarily result from adopting this plan, must be so evident as to require no illustration here.

It is not uncommon, when any public measures of this kind are proposed, that people, who have other views, suggest so many real or imaginary difficulties and inconveniences likely to arise from carrying them into effect, as greatly to embarrass and retard the execution. It ought, however, to be remarked, that in the course of the sur-

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vey, on which the report is founded, the idea of erecting a bridge at Boat of Brigg, and forming new lines of road from Banff and Portsoy, through the centre of the district to that bridge, and from thence to Elgin, was considered by all ranks as an object of the greatest importance, and more likely than any other to promote the internal improvement of both countries. One objection indeed, though it appeared imaginary rather than real, was suggested, viz. That the snow would often lie so deep in that part of the country, as to render the road impassable for wheel carriages; but it should be observed, that though the snow may dissolve more slowly for a short space in winter on this proposed tract of road than on the other; yet in the depth of the fall of snow on either road, there is little difference at any time.

It appears only necessary again to repeat, that from every information that could be procured, there are no measures likely to be adopted, which stand a fairer chance of introducing a general spirit of improvement in agriculture, extending the manufactures, and promoting the internal improvement of that part of the kingdom, than forming proper lines of road, keeping them in substantial repair, and building bridges where necessary. It is therefore to be hoped, that the Honourable Board to whom this report is addressed, in conjunction with the proprietors of that part of the country, will form and carry into execution such plans as may appear to them best calculated for attaining objects so highly beneficial and important.

Markets and Fairs.

There are regular weekly markets held in the towns of Banff, Cullen, Portsoy, Keith and Fochabers, for the sale

sale of meal, butcher meat, poultry, eggs, butter, cheese, linen yarn, and such other articles as the country people can spare.

Though the price of fish, and all other kinds of provisions, are more moderate here than they are in the south part of the kingdom, yet they have increased in value fully 50 per cent. within these last twenty years.

The price of Butcher meat is from 3d. to 4d. per lib.

A Goose - - - 2s. to 2s. 6d.

A Duck - - - 7d. to 9d.

A Hen - - - 6d. to 8d.

A Chicken - - - 2d. to 3d.

A dozen Eggs - - - 2d. to 3d.

A pound of Butter (24 oz.) 6d. to 9d.

A pound of Cheese (do.) 2d. to 3d.

The price of grain and oat-meal for the last seven years, is ascertained by the annexed state of the fiars of the county for that period. Besides the meal and grain necessary for the supply of the inhabitants, there are considerable quantities sold and carried over-land to Strathspey and Badenoch every year.

The quantity annually exported from the district at large, could not be correctly ascertained, in consequence of its being under the jurisdiction of different Custom-houses; but in order to shew clearly the difference in the exports of meal and grain, in a good and bad season, the following statement procured from the Custom-house of Aberdeen is subjoined:

Account

Account of Grain and Oat-meal, exported from that part of the County of Banff, situated within the precinct of the Port of Aberdeen, between the 5th of January 1787, and the 5th of January 1794.

Years.	Quarters Oats.	Quarters Barley.	Quarters Pease.	Bolls Oat-meal.
1787	900	none	none	1000
1788	200	none	none	none
1789	2158	1627	none	12,017
1790	3304	2761	none	10,910
1791	3660	1010	none	6240
1792	3451	1841	75	7277
1793	780	2471	68	11,679
Totals	14,453	9710	143	49,123

It is worthy of remark here, that from the same account it likewise appears, that in the period above-mentioned, 193,984 pounds of butter, and 17,920 pounds of cheese, were exported within that period.

There are several stated fairs held annually in almost every parish for the sale of cattle, at which many of the dealers from Angus, and other parts of the south of Scotland, attend. But although, at all these fairs, considerable numbers of cattle are generally sold, yet these held at Keith are the most considerable; at one of which it is not uncommon to see several thousand head of black cattle.

It was impossible to ascertain the number or value of the cattle sold from this district yearly, yet from every information that could be procured, it is certain that more money is brought into the country, from the sale of cattle, than by the exports of grain and oat-meal.

Live Stock.

Before the introduction of improvements in agriculture, and before the demand from England, and the South of Scotland, for North Country cattle, became so great as it hath been of late years, little attention was paid to the different breeds of animals in this district. They were considered as the means by which the lands could be cultivated, rather than as an object of profit to the farmer.

Black Cattle.

Though this district has been long famous for the best and largest breed of black cattle in the north of Scotland, yet the manner in which they were treated before the practice of ploughing with horses became common, could not tend to increase their value in respect to figure or bone. The increased demand for this species of stock, and consequent high prices, induced the intelligent farmers to pay more attention to the improvement of the breed; and of late years some of the most respectable proprietors, particularly the Earl of Fife and General Grant of Ballandallach, have spared no expence in introducing from time to time, the most valuable breed of bulls and cows from England, Guernsey, the isle of Sky, and other parts of the highlands of Scotland.

Although the treatment of black cattle by the poorer tenants in this district, is still much the same that it was fifty years ago, yet the circumstances above-mentioned, joined to the attention which is now paid to preserving the most promising for the market, and for the propagation of the stock, the general introduction of turnip husbandry, the attention excited in other countries to this important object, and the improvements lately introduced here, of managing the plough and cart by a pair of oxen,

oxen, have tended in a no small degree to the improvement of the breed in point of size and figure, so that the price has been considerably advanced, perhaps nearly doubled, within these twenty years. The average price of oxen sold in this district may be reckoned at five guineas each. Middle-sized oxen, when fat, weigh 36 stone Amsterdam.

Horses have been employed on the larger farms for several years past in preference to oxen. Wherever that has happened, particular attention has been paid to improve the breed, and considering that the country is in general still open and uninclosed, it is surprising to what an extent the farmers have succeeded in improving the size and shape of this species of stock. The ordinary price of the best horses used for draught twenty or thirty years ago, did not exceed ten or twelve pounds, while now, eighteen or twenty pounds is by no means considered as an extraordinary price.

In the higher parts of the district, where oxen ploughs are still commonly used, and among the poorer tenants all over the country, a good young horse for the cart may be purchased at eight or nine pounds; and it is worthy of remark, that many such might be found in this district, which, if taken up before being worked, and kept properly for a year or two, would make excellent hardy ponies for the saddle.

Sheep. Some of the more substantial farmers in the low part of the country, have introduced the Northumberland, or Calley's breed of sheep, producing a fleece of from eight to twelve lib. Amsterdam, and weighing from sixteen to twenty lib. per quarter. These when first brought into the country sold for thirty or forty shillings each, but they have since fallen considerably in price, and from that circumstance

circumstance, added to the extra expence of maintenance, and the additional care of them, which is necessary, it begins now to be doubted here, whether they are the most profitable breed for the country. In the higher parts of the district, a considerable number of the black-faced or Linton breed are to be seen. Their properties are so well known, as to render any description here perfectly unnecessary.

The only other breed is a small white-faced kind, the antient breed of the country, and though not equal, either in point of weight or the value of fleece, to the Linton breed, yet by proper management, their wool, which is very fine in quality, might be greatly improved in quantity. But it must be acknowledged, that great ignorance and inattention prevails here in regard to the proper management of these useful animals, numbers of them perishing yearly under the rot and scab, which might be prevented by an ordinary degree of care.

Swine are reared in considerable numbers at all the mills and distilleries in the district, and a few are to be seen in the farm-yards of the principal tenants; but as pork and bacon are by no means the favourite food of the inhabitants, and the utter aversion of not a few, the market for the sale of them is very limited. But for many years bygone, butchers from Aberdeen have been in the practice of coming into the country every year for the purpose of purchasing all that they can find fit for their purpose; and it is not uncommon to see herds of two or three hundred carried off at a time. It should be observed that Aberdeen has long been noted for salted and pickled pork, and it forms no inconsiderable article of export from that harbour.

Woods

Woods and Plantations.

From the present appearance of the country, it is certain that about forty years ago, it was in general very destitute of wood. About that time the spirit for planting seems to have been introduced; but though there are now a great many extensive plantations along the coast, particularly around the family seats of the Duke of Gordon, and the Earls of Fife and Findlater, and also several considerable tracts of planting in other parts of the country, yet, upon the whole, little attention seems to have been paid to shelter the arable lands, so as to improve the climate. There are perhaps few countries where this mode of planting would be attended with more beneficial consequences, as from the high and exposed situation of a great proportion of the corn fields, as has been already observed, the climate must naturally be cold and late; and if by any means the harvests could be brought forward ten days or a fortnight earlier, the damage which so often happens to the later part of the crops would seldom take place, as, in general, the weather in the first two or three weeks of the harvest is as favourable here, as in any part of the north of Scotland. It is however impossible to carry on this mode of improvement to any extent, unless the lands were classed together into regular farms, and inclosed and subdivided: Were this done, and belts and clumps of trees planted in proper situations, there is every reason to believe that the climate would in time be thereby much improved. It may be proper to remark, that the higher and more exposed the lands are, the belts of planting ought to be the broader, as in such situations trees will not thrive unless they are planted thick, so as to afford shelter to one another. In order to encourage the tenants to preserve such plantations from any damage
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by their cattle, it might be proper to follow the plan adopted by the late Earl of Findlater, with several of his tenants, of giving them, at the expiry of the lease, every third tree (or the value in money) which had been planted during the currency of the lease. Interest is the tie which has the surest hold of mankind, and a compact on this principle between landlord and tenant is much more likely to secure the preservation of trees than any other measure that can be adopted.

In the more remote parts of the district there are considerable tracts of natural woods, consisting of oak, alder, birch, &c. on the side of almost every rivulet, particularly on the banks of the waters of Avon, Livat, Fiddich, and Dulnan; of which many of the implements of husbandry used in that part of the country are constructed. There is but a small proportion of the Scots fir arrived to such an age as to be fit for domestic purposes, and therefore a great part of the country is still supplied with wood which is floated down from the forests of Strathspey. The period however is not far distant, when the district will be able to supply itself, and also spare for exportation.

All the proprietors in the country seem at present to possess a spirit for planting, and if in place of covering extensive tracts of barren heath with trees, which can only tend to the improvement of these particular spots, they were to plant stripes and clumps of trees among the arable fields, it would not only ornament the country, but improve the climate, which must be acknowledged by all to be an object of the greatest importance to this country, and which, if attained, would be cheaply purchased on almost any terms.

Miscellaneous.

Miscellaneous Observations, and Hints for Improvement.

From the preceding report it appears, that a spirit for improvement has been pretty generally introduced, and that if the proprietors at large were to study their own interest so far as to give the necessary encouragement to their tenants, the still greater improvement of the country might be thereby effected.

The climate of this district, it will be generally acknowledged, is more favourable to the cultivation of grass than grain, and to introduce a rotation of cropping, by which one half of the farm was to be constantly under sown grass and turnip, would turn out to be a measure highly favourable to the interest of landlords and tenants, as from the best information, there is every reason to believe, that for a series of 70 or 80 years back, such rainy late seasons have recurred once in four or five years, as have greatly damaged, and on some occasions, almost totally ruined the crops, the corn often remaining on the fields till the middle or end of December. Such tenants as have their farms inclosed and subdivided, pursue nearly the above mentioned system, and after several years experience, have found their advantage in their doing so, not only from the superior crops of grain which they reap, but also in the improvement of their live stock. It being obvious, that cattle reared in sheltered inclosures, enjoy plenty of food and their natural freedom, must rise in bone, figure, and value, greatly above those which are reared in an open exposed pasture, restricted often to a narrow field, and pent up every night in a fold. The superior price which Banff-shire cattle are sold for, in the South country markets, compared to the breed of any other district in the North, and the quantity of butter which is annually exported, amount to complete evidence of its
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being an excellent grazing country, and should induce the proprietors to try, by every possible means, to introduce this system of husbandry into more general practice: But it is impossible to do this with effect, unless the farms are enlarged, inclosed and subdivided. In general, there is great abundance of stone quarries in the district; but as in some particular places, stone is not to be had without great expence, hedge and ditch might be substituted in place of stone fences. It may be safely stated, that if the farms were inclosed, every arable acre in the district would yield the proprietors, on an average, from five to six shillings of additional rent, and the tenants at the same time would live more comfortably, and become more useful members of the state. This great improvement can only be effected in one of two ways. The first, by the proprietors being at the whole outlay, on receiving a reasonable interest from their tenants for the money so expended, or by their granting leases of such duration, and on such equitable terms, to substantial and intelligent farmers, as to induce them to undertake the business at their own expence, which has hitherto been the practice in this district. Were this plan to be adopted, it is impossible to state with any degree of certainty the advantages both of a public and private nature, that would necessarily result from it; but if reference is had to those countries where such improvements have been made, some idea of the extent may be formed.

The draining of land seems to be a mode of improvement very little known or practised here, though there are few countries where it could be done at less expence, and perhaps none in which greater advantages would result from proper well constructed drains. The arable lands generally lie more or less in a sloping direction, which allows a ready descent to the water which falls from the clouds,

clouds, and would of course render the drains less expensive, and the nature of the soil, which is in general retentive of water, would be much improved, as by keeping the lands free of surface water, during the winter and spring, and planting belts and clumps of trees, so as to procure shelter, there can be no doubt, but the climate would be thereby improved, which, from what has been stated, must appear to be an object of the very first importance to every person concerned in the cultivation of the soil.

Though there are few countries which possess a more abundant stock of limestone, and indeed very few in which a greater quantity of lime is manufactured, yet it has by no means come into general use as a manure. Those who possess the most improved farms do indeed use it, and from experience find that it answers their most sanguine expectations ; but the general run of tenants, particularly those in Strylla or Strath-Illa, though they manufacture 40 or 50,000 bolls annually, and sell it at the low price of 6 d. or 8 d. the boll, equal to 64 Scots pints powdered lime, after the trouble and expence of carrying it ten or fifteen miles, yet they rarely ever think of applying it as a manure to their own farms. Though this trade of manufacturing lime for other countries, no doubt, brings some money into the district, and enables the people who are employed in it to pay their rents ; yet considering the disadvantages under which they labour, no one will pretend to say, but that these people could be more usefully and more profitably employed, both for themselves and the public, in other lines of life. In place of burning the lime stone in small, ill constructed open kilns, (which is the practice at present, and by which, perhaps, nearly double the quantity of fuel is consumed that would be requisite if the kilns

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were

were built larger, and of a more perfect construction), and in place of a great number of people being thus employed, who possess small farms, and who generally cultivate them in the worst possible manner, it would be, no doubt, for the interest of the proprietors, were they to erect proper kilns at their own expence, and employ experienced persons to manufacture lime; for it cannot be supposed that these men can do as much work, as the same number would do, if by a proper division of labour, and under the direction of proper persons, they were confined each to that part of the work to which he was accustomed. The tenants should also be bound by their leases to lay on a certain quantity of lime yearly on their farms, under such rules and regulations as are adopted, and have been found by experience to answer in other countries. Lime, by this mode of management, could be afforded at a lower price, the use of it as a manure be generally introduced, and the situation of the people now employed in that trade, would become more comfortable, by their being at liberty to devote their *whole time* and attention to the proper cultivation and improvement of their farms, or by their being employed in manufactures.

From what has been formerly stated, it appears that the value and extent of the whole fisheries on the coast are pretty considerable, and if any improvement could be made in regard to the situation of the people, it is certainly an object that should be attended to. There are from 46 to 50 boats usually employed in this trade, along the coast of this narrow district, and about 300 men. They are in general a sober industrious race of people, and very attentive to the business in which they are engaged. At the period when the survey of this country was made (December 1793) an immense quantity

quantity of haddocks were daily caught ; but such was the scarcity and extravagant price of salt, which was selling at 2 d. and 3 d. per pound, that the fishers could not go on in the usual manner to salt that extra quantity of fish which they had caught, and which they found was above the ordinary consumpt of the country.

Whether this scarcity and high price of salt arose from a real or artificial scarcity, it is not necessary here to enquire ; but if any regulation could be made in favour of these people, and others in the like situation, on other parts of the coast, in regard to that necessary article, it would tend to increase the value of the fishings, and could not in any perceptible degree affect the revenues of the state.

In time of war, these people, from a constant apprehension of being pressed on board ships of war, are compelled to forsake their natural element, and to seek protection in the most remote parts of the highlands ; while their families, which generally consist of a wife and five or six children, remain at home in a state of extreme wretchedness. It might be worthy the attention of government to consider of some plan, by which this useful class of people might be enabled to follow their occupation at all seasons without fear or dread. Perhaps, if at the commencement of a war, every two boats were to furnish an able-bodied seaman, which would be cheerfully agreed to, it might be proper, in that case, to grant a *full and ample* protection to the remainder during the whole course of the war ; and it is probable, this would be a fair and equal arrangement, as a very great proportion of these fishers are old and unfit for service on board ships of war, and therefore would not be taken even in a time of the hottest press. Some such compact as

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this exists betwixt government and the inhabitants of Shetland. They furnish one hundred seamen for the Royal Navy upon any extraordinary emergency, and the whole fishermen belonging to these isles are thereafter allowed to prosecute their business without any apprehension of being visited by a press-gang.

One other hardship these people labour under, but which is felt equally severe by all those who are engaged in shipping, commerce and manufactures along this coast. This is the want of a Custom-house in a central situation. At present no goods can be shipped or landed, nor any vessels be allowed to sail without the necessary permission, which must be procured either from the Custom-house at Aberdeen, fifty miles distant on the one hand, or from Inverness, at the distance of sixty miles on the other. If a deputation on a small scale was granted from the Board of Customs, to two or three persons residing in Banff, to negotiate the business, it would certainly tend to promote the trade and manufactures of the country, and the additional expence must be very trifling indeed.

The great obstacles to the improvement of this district have been pretty fully detailed in the course of the preceding report. These which appear most formidable are the small size of the farms in general; the great expence to which an improving tenant is obliged to submit in erecting proper houses and fences; the short duration of the leases which are granted to tenants of this description, the severe restrictions to mills, and the wretched state of the roads. These, however, are difficulties which the proprietors might with a proper attention to their own interests and to the prosperity of the country, easily remove. Were that done, and the means of improvement

provement which have been hinted at introduced, such as building farm-houses, enlarging, inclosing and subdividing the farms; planting clumps and belts of trees, so as to shelter the arable fields; draining the lands; obliging the tenants to have nearly the half of their farms under sown grass and turnip, and to use lime as a manure; there is no doubt but the proprietors would in twenty or thirty years nearly double their revenue; the situation of the tenants would be much improved, and trade and manufactures increase beyond any calculation that can at present be made.

State of the FIARS of the County of Banff from the year 1787 to the year 1793, both inclusive.

Years.	Wheat per Boll.	Barley per Boll.	Oats per Boll,	Oat-meal per boll 8 stone Am- sterdam.
1787	L. 0 16 8	L. 0 17 6	L. 0 12 0	L. 0 13 4
1788	0 16 8	0 17 6	0 12 0	0 13 4
1789	1 0 0	0 11 8	0 9 4	0 11 0
1790	1 1 0	0 14 6	0 11 0	0 11 9
1791	1 1 0	0 15 6	0 11 6	0 12 6
1792	0 18 0	0 18 0	0 12 6	0 13
1793	Not ascertained.	0 18 0	0 13 4	0 13 4

N. B. The average price of meal in this country for twenty years preceding 1782, was 11 s. 7½ d. per boll. By the above statement the average price has been 12 s. 8½ d. per boll.



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2. second of these is the fact that the
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